

General Information	
Host Country	Australia
Host School	Edith Cowan University, Joondalup Campus
Program start & end dates	Mid-February – End of June
Program of Study	Undergraduate Bachelor of Arts, Psychology degree
Type of Study Abroad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exchange <input type="checkbox"/> UMAP exchange <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
General Evaluation	
<p>In a couple of sentences, summarize and explain your general evaluation of your experience.</p>	<p>Overall, I would say my experience was amazing and extremely transformative. I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to go abroad and will forever cherish my time and memories there.</p> <p>Now that I have returned home, I recognize immense growth within myself. I learned an abundance of invaluable lessons and grew so much as a person. I feel more capable, independent and resilient than I could have ever imagined at the start of this year.</p>
Arrival	
<p>How easy or challenging was it to obtain your travel documents (visa, permits, etc.)?</p>	<p>The visa process was quite stressful for me. To apply, a conformation of enrollment is required from the host school, which was delayed much longer than I expected. Despite multiple emails to ECU, I received my conformation of enrollment number much later than I anticipated and therefore, could not apply for my visa until later than I would have liked.</p> <p>Additionally, the wait time between applying for my visa and receiving it was quite substantial and in the end, I did not receive my visa until a week before my departure. I applied on December 13th and did not receive until January 25th. As a result, this became a major source of anxiety for me and something I would recommend combatting and taking care of as soon as you are able to.</p>
<p>Describe your transportation arrangements to your host country. Would you alter any part of those arrangements?</p>	<p>From Vancouver, I had a ride to the airport from my family and then was able to smoothly transition from YVR to Perth, Australia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Town cars Australia, tracking flight and got an email with an itinerary - Missed flight, but they were accommodating <p>Once I arrived in Perth, my transportation arrangements were great. There was a free car service provided by my living village which arranged a driver to pick me up straight from the airport and take me write to my new living village. It was seamless and relieved a great deal of stress once I got there.</p>
<p>How was your experience clearing customs and immigration upon arrival in your host country? Any surprises?</p>	<p>Seamless, no surprises and not many questions. I had everything printed and laminated ready for questions to come but nothing happened. They just let me through as they usually would.</p>

<p>Describe how you traveled to your host facility. How long did it take and how much did it cost?</p>	<p>Left YVR Jan 29th at 8:25 pm Small layover in Sydney (1 hour and 50 mins) Then Sydney to Perth, arrived Jan 31st In total it was over 24 hours of travelling Around 16 hours to Sydney and then 5 hours to Perth Waited in airport extra</p>
<p>Orientation and Assistance</p>	
<p>How satisfied were you with the assistance available to at your host school? Were there people and resources available for you for support?</p>	<p>Throughout my time there, I didn't really reach out to support through my school. However, I know they did have counselling services offered as well as international student opportunities. A few other international students that I met at the living accommodations shared that they went on a few trips planned through the university.</p> <p>Through the "ECU guild", which can be found on Facebook or Instagram, they are most a variety of organized activities and events for students to meet others and get involved. They have university activities which are more local, as well as planned day trips to places such as the zoo, rottenest island, boat tours, etc. it is important to stay updated on these websites and social media accounts to seek new opportunities.</p>
<p>What help did you receive from the international staff or office?</p>	<p>I did not seek much support there from the school, there was a variety of international/new students living at the accommodations which gave me a lot of resources to chat about the new experiences I was going through. There was a point when I considered reaching out to a counselor and although I did not follow through, the process seemed simple and seemed as though there was a stable support system in place if need be.</p>
<p>How was new student orientation at the host university? What did they do?</p>	<p>At ECU they had fairs at the beginning for new students and ECU day which had many stands, free items and a BBQ. I felt very welcomed by the university and although I met most people in my living accommodations, there would have been other opportunities to meet people outside of the living village through school orientations, etc. It appeared that they prioritize the well-being of students and ensured that new students felt welcomed, they also had a range of international students which made me feel secure immediately.</p>
<p>Housing & Daily Life</p>	
<p>Describe your accommodation in your host country. Were you pleased with this choice or what would you have done differently?</p>	<p>I lived on the ECU Joondalup living village accommodations. Originally, I was aiming to live alone or with two-four people. However, in the end my only option was to live in a 6-bedroom shared apartment.</p> <p>I was hesitant at first to live with five others, however, I am very happy with my choice in retrospect. Granted, I was extremely lucky with my roommates and got along well with all of them. I know that for others in the village, many other six-bedroom apartments were not as lucky to</p>

	<p>be all friends. However, I would still recommend choosing to live with roommates.</p> <p>There are many activities that the village puts on and having roommates makes the whole experience less daunting. It feels like there is always somebody to talk to and it makes you more eager to go out and meet others because you won't have to go alone. I noticed that many of the people that lived in single dorms stuck to themselves a lot and seemed very isolated as they got comfortable staying in their rooms and felt overwhelmed coming down and meeting people without the comfort of somebody else with them.</p> <p>Instantly, I felt at ease being in the company of my roommates and even though in the end I loved all of them, I would have likely had at least one person that I connected with none the less. I am so happy I did not choose to live alone or with just a single roommate. I was so happy to be in the six person apartments and it also allowed me to make other friends in the village without getting shy socializing on my own.</p>
<p>When could you move into housing and how long were you allowed to stay?</p>	<p>I moved in on the 31st of January and I moved out on June 15th. However, my contract did not expire until July 3rd so I would have been able to stay up until that point. On the 15th of June, I left Perth and went to Sydney for the remaining couple weeks before flying home.</p>
<p>What kinds of services and facilities were nearby where you lived (shop, cafe gym, parks, pharmacy, stations...)</p>	<p>Outside of the village (2-minute walk from home) there was a free bus service which went in a loop around the university and around the local shops/shopping Centre. The Joondalup campus is located right near the Lakeside shopping Centre which is a big mall with all the shops you would need. Additionally, there is a train line and various buses that take off from the shops and that was very convenient too. It made it easy to get to the city, beaches and to get groceries from.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restaurants and cafes, clothing, groceries, home supplies, etc. <p>The free bus service that the university service offers is so nice and was utilized. Additionally, everything else is in walking distance and there is so many shops and stores that would make everything you would need accessible in the same area. The mall is also a very short walk away.</p>
<p>Describe what you did about meals and what other options were available. How satisfied were you with the food?</p>	<p>For meals, I did all my own grocery shopping and cooking. This was not something I was used to and an adjustment. The first few times I went grocery shopping, I had no idea how much to spend, what to buy, what I could cook, etc. However, over time it started to become routine, and I was more accustomed to the meals I was confident making and enjoyed eating. I did sometimes go out to eat at fast food restaurants and local restaurants, however I kept this to a minimum as money was scarce and I usually had a certain amount of groceries that needed to be eaten before expiry.</p>

<p>How close was your accommodation to where you studied?</p>	<p>The accommodation was on the university campus, so all of my classes and the library were in very close proximity and all walking distance.</p>
<p>Academics & Course Registration</p>	
<p>Describe the registration process at your host institution. What assistance was available to you? Were you satisfied?</p>	<p>The registration process was like KPU's. The actual signing up of courses was easy. However, finding courses and ensuring that they transfer to KPU and line up with the courses that KPU offers was somewhat of a tedious process. Beforehand, I planned my courses however I needed to change them a few times based on what ECU offered. I had originally signed up for a couple classes online, however once I was there, I found out that international students can only take one online course, so I had to drop one of the ones I was in and find a replacement.</p> <p>Other than this, it was all okay in the end, I would just recommend planning courses early on so that it does not become a source of stress.</p>
<p>What advice would you offer to another exchange student about registration at your host institution?</p>	<p>Ask questions if you're unsure and make sure that the classes you select are useful for the degree you're taking at home and have an equivalent course offered through KPU. That way, you still feel productive working towards your degree at home in a new place.</p> <p>Keep in mind that it will be an adjustment living somewhere else and with a different learning approach, so I wouldn't recommended signing up for a class that you know will be challenging, because if you have a choice, that would be better to save for KPU once your back home and there's not as much external factors happening.</p>
<p>What tips do you have for finding the courses and course syllabuses/outlines?</p>	<p>If you go to the 'unit book' and scroll through the available units, it'll show you everything. I found it very difficult to find my courses at first because initially, it only shows the courses offered for each course they offer. They call courses 'units' which is important to remember.</p> <p>On exchange, you won't be able to scroll through the course options of the program you're taking at KPU because they are all specialized there and designed for full degrees. Instead, going to the Unit handbook and looking through all the units individually will be advantageous. Once you're looking at all of the units individually, you'll be able to pick what you'd like to take.</p>
<p>Academics & Course Registration (cont'd)</p>	
<p>How satisfied were you with the number of knowledge/skills you obtained from your host?</p>	<p>In the end, I feel like I received a good amount of knowledge from my host instruction. However, most of my knowledge was a result of external experiences rather than school. In terms of academic learning, the knowledge I gained was like here. This may be attributed to the fact that I took relatively simple courses and nothing too far outside of my prior knowledge.</p>

How did the style of teaching, and workload compare to Canada? Was it more independent or group learning?	Combination of group and individual work. Much more self-paced throughout the semester as there are not as many assignments. Typically, a couple of assignments throughout the semester and a large exam worth the majority of the class grade.
How many courses did you take during your time abroad? Are there particular courses would you recommend?	I took four courses while I was abroad. Most of them were electives, specific to my degree.
What was your impression of the computer facilities, library, internet access, specialized equipment and supplies available at your host facility?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very nice - High quality - Up-to-date technology and facilitates
Cost	
Books and Supplies/per term:	\$50-75 (there are cheaper alternatives through e books or library services)
Flight:	Approx. \$1,500 for a round trip from Vancouver to Sydney and then Approx. \$400 AUD from Sydney to Perth
Accommodation/per month:	\$240.70 per week \$962.80 per month
Meals/per month:	Approx. \$250- \$300 per month
Local transportation/per month:	Approx. \$25-\$40 per month
Health insurance/per term:	Approx. \$239 for 6 months and \$478 for a year
Communication (internet, phone, etc.) – per term	\$40 per month for phone plan, internet included with accommodation
Travel documents (Passport, Study permit, visa, etc.)	Around \$1000-\$1,600 for a sub class 500 student visa (can't remember exact cost, website says from \$1,600 – however I believe I spent less than that)
Vaccinations:	\$0
Personal spending (entertainment and extra travel) – per term	Overall- Approx. \$1500- \$2000 in extra spending, including a trip to Sydney at the end before flying home and fun activities throughout the trip
Were there unexpected costs you encounter? What items were less or more expensive than expected?	One physio trip- \$100 Bedding- Approx. \$30 Kitchen supplies and other home necessities: approx. \$150-\$200 Self-care products: shampoo, conditioner, face wash, etc.: Approx \$100
Extra-Curricular & Social Activities	

<p>What type of organized activities were available to you? What extra-curricular activities would you recommend to future students?</p>	<p>There were many activities available through the university. There was a plethora of clubs, events, sports teams, etc. They really value community and had many ways students could get involved with one another and the university.</p> <p>Likewise, my living accommodation offered so many different activities. Each month that I was there, they would post a calendar which detailed the upcoming events. There were village parties, trivia nights, free dinners, movie nights, etc. This allowed me to meet any people in the village and was something my roommates and I constantly looked forward to.</p> <p>Additionally, there was a tv lounge area at the village, a movie room, pool table, ping-pong, boxing bag, pool, basketball hoop, etc. at the village. It was a really good way to meet others and get everybody together.</p>
<p>Did you travel outside the host location? If so, where do you recommend?</p>	<p>After my time in Perth, I went to Sydney for two weeks. I would recommend travelling to Sydney if that is an option. Sydney is much larger than Perth and was a really great way to end my trip.</p> <p>Additionally, I knew a lot of people that travelled to various parts of Asia after their studies were completed. Asia is close in proximity and with the right deal/location it can be cost efficient for a vacation.</p>
<p>What opportunities were there to work or volunteer? Did you require special permits to do this?</p>	<p>I would have been able to work on my student visa, there was a limit on the hours I could work a week though. I searched for jobs but was not lucky with finding one. I ended up not working for the time I was there or volunteering. However, with more effort and flexibility I would have been able to work or volunteer and I'm sure somebody else could find these opportunities with some consistent effort and research.</p>
<p>Health and Safety</p>	
<p>Describe any health/safety concerns or issues you had during your experience.</p>	<p>During my time abroad, I faced a minor shoulder injury from over-stretching. I originally went to the hospital for this, but the cost was going to be quite high, so I decided to go to a physio instead. The physio visit was \$100 but I only needed one to help my injury. Insurance did not cover either of these visits.</p>
<p>What helped you keep safe and healthy? Did you access any health care supports and if so, how was the experience?</p>	<p>To stay safe and healthy, I did not engage in high-risk activity, remained alert and cautious everywhere I went and did not do anything that made me uncomfortable.</p>
<p>What wellness supports did they offer at the University? Were there counselling or medical services?</p>	<p>Yes, they offered both at ECU Joondalup.</p>
<p>Personal and Cultural Connections</p>	
<p>Were there any cultural differences you had to adjust to? Were there language barrier issues?</p>	<p>No language barriers, a few cultural differences with my roommates as they were all Australian. Differences such as humor, habits, phrases, word differences, etc. However, these were more evident at the start and not a major concern at all.</p>

What part(s) of the country and culture did you most appreciate?	I appreciated how laid back and kind everybody was there. It is true that Australians are more laid back and that is evident in their culture and the way they live their lives.
How was it traveling alone and making friends?	I had a great experience travelling alone and was very fortunate making friends. I was able to become friends with all five of my roommates and other people around the village.
How were you treated by local people? By university staff and faculty? By students?	I was treated very kindly by everybody. Everybody was very welcoming and kind to me throughout the entire trip.
How accommodating are they to students with a disability? Were there any accommodations offered?	Nothing I saw would indicate that they were not accommodating in this regard.
How is the situation for students who are visible minorities in your host country?	Nothing I saw would indicate that they were not accommodating in this regard.
How welcoming are they to for those who identify as LGBTQIA+?	Nothing I saw would indicate that they were not accommodating in this regard.

Overall

What are 5-10 important things other students should know before going to your host country/region?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perth is a quiet, smaller city- but its not boring! Perth is often stereotyped as a “boring” area, which is something I heard many times - however I found it perfect for living and studying. There are plenty of places to experience/explore and Western Australia has beautiful beaches. I enjoyed the quiet nature of Joondalup and how peaceful I felt living there. 2. Take advantage of your time there and go do things! As the semester progresses, it becomes easier to stay in routine and spend more time inside. However, I recommended taking advantage of your free time and experiencing Joondalup. There is a free bus from the living village that goes directly to lakeside shopping center. The mall is large, filled with many stores and places to eat. The train station is attached to the mall, and this takes you to a variety of different places- take advantage of these opportunities. 3. Talk to people and be social. It’s important to put yourself out there and get to know different people. Especially living at the village, many of the residents are also studying abroad and looking to make connections. The village hosts many different events, and I recommend going to these or seeking social opportunities through the school. Building connections will make the experience 100x more enjoyable and less lonely/difficult during the tougher times. 4. Anticipate the schooling/grading system being different. They use different formats for grading rather than letter grades and I recommend familiarizing yourself with this. Additionally, all four of my classes included largely weighted exams – with one of my exams being worth 65%. <p>The examinations typically account for most of your overall grade, with just a couple assignments throughout the class to account for the rest. Although this is similar to some classes at KPU, in my experience, all my Australian classes followed this format, whereas only a couple of my KPU classes have had exams worth the majority of my overall grade.</p>

<p>5. Their tax is already included in the costs of everything, and they don't tip. When you go to buy something at the store, the cost paying will be the same as it says on the price tag. This is something I needed to adjust to, as I was anticipating the price to go up once I scanned all my items, which never happened. Additionally, tipping is not something they do there, and you are not expected to tip anywhere- including restaurants, services, uber, door dash, etc.</p>	
<p>6. They drive on the other side of the road – although this is well-known, it still surprised me at first!</p>	
<p>7.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	
<p>What was the most rewarding part of your study abroad experience?</p>	<p>The most rewarding part was the personal growth I experienced. The decision to embark on this journey was far beyond my comfort zone, however I proved to myself how resilient, self-sufficient and adaptable I can be. I feel extremely proud for taking up this opportunity and pushing myself past the boundaries of my comfort zone. This year of my life has been by far, the most rewarding and significant.</p>
<p>What was the greatest challenge you faced during your experience abroad?</p>	<p>The greatest challenge I faced, was learning who I am outside of Canada and without the safety net of a familiar environment. Once I arrived in a completely unfamiliar country, I realized I needed to rebuild my life from scratch.</p> <p>I needed to re-learn how I navigate daily life, challenges, making friends, seeking new opportunities and experiences, how I enjoy spending my time, what I like to eat, etc.</p> <p>Although these are all things that were natural to me in Canada, once I was completely alone, I really had to get to know myself on a deeper level. I faced numerous moments of self-doubt, contemplating the person I am/the person I wanted to become. Although this was not a factor I necessarily anticipated, I am so happy with where I'm at today and how much growth I experienced during my time abroad.</p>
<p>How has your perspective changed as a result of your study abroad experience?</p>	<p>My perspective on life has changed significantly since I've returned. I feel a deeper understanding of my values, goals and overall life direction.</p> <p>Living abroad highlighted the significance of experience, independence, adventure and connection in my life. These are all aspects I truly value and will prioritize moving forward. I feel capable to take action and make decisions in alignment with my new-found goals and priorities.</p>
<p>What else do you want to add about your study abroad?</p>	<p>I would recommend studying abroad to anybody that is looking for transformation and direction. Before leaving, I felt quite stagnant and un-fulfilled with my life at home. I was craving independence, experience and travel, yet I had no idea how I was going to make that happen.</p> <p>Once I decided to apply for the study abroad program, I remained doubtful. I had no idea how this experience would turn out, if I would</p>

regret it, whether it was a bad decision, etc. There were so many “what ifs” that I encountered, yet I continued to persevere and embrace the unknown.

Now that I have completed my time at ECU, I truly believe this decision was the best one I’ve ever made. Challenging myself to do this and moving abroad has eliminated the dullness I used to feel before I left. I feel a new zest for the direction of my life and get excited about the opportunities and possibilities available.

All that to say, it truly is what you make it. Although this journey is terrifying and filled with uncertainty, embracing this and making the most of the experience will hopefully foster immense independence, self-confidence and fulfillment – as it has for me 😊

Below is a space to share any photos:

